

Approved X

Interagency Human Trafficking Task Force
Meeting Minutes for Victim Services Subcommittee
Monday, June 11, 2012

Convened at 10:02 am

Members present: Stephanie Decandia, Cherie Jimenez, Audrey Porter, Julie Dahlstrom, Tom King, Joe McKown

Members absent: Katia Santiago-Taylor

Additional participants: Steven Procopio, Thomas Smith

Staff Present: Nikki Antonucci, Liam Lowney

Introduction of Task Force Members and Participants

Members introduced themselves and we were joined by Steven Procopio from GLASS and Thomas Smith from Justice at Work, who are providing presentations..

May Meeting Minutes Approved

Upon proper motion made and seconded, the Subcommittee voted to approve the May meeting minutes without changes.

Remote Participation Approved

Upon proper motion made and seconded, the Subcommittee voted to approve remote participation pursuant to the open meeting laws.

Needs Assessments

Each member presented their needs assessments summarizing services provided by their agency to trafficking survivors. Agencies included My Life My Choice, MA Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers, Kim's Project, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, and Lutheran Social Services. There was agreement to distribute the needs assessments via email to all members.

Presentation Regarding Labor Trafficking

Thomas Smith, an attorney and the Executive Director of Justice at Work presented about his work and the role of worker centers throughout Massachusetts. Justice at Work provides strategic workplace-related legal services to community based labor organizations in order to support and encourage low-wage immigrant worker organizing that enables workers to directly impact conditions at work and in their communities and families. They work with a variety of partners, including the Brazilian Immigrant Center, Brazilian Women's Group, Centro Comunitario de los Trabajadores, the Massachusetts Coalition of Occupational Safety, and the Chinese Progressive Association.

- Tom emphasized the importance of providing safe places, such as worker centers, for people to unite, organize, and come together to support workers' rights. He stressed that, as in the context of sex trafficking, it is important in labor case for "survivors" - or, in this case, workers - to play a formative role in building programs and play an integral part in building the response to trafficking.
- Tom works closely with the Mirna Montano at the Massachusetts Coalition of Occupational Safety (MassCOSH) in Dorchester, and he suggested that we include her in future meetings or presentations.
- Tom stressed that the worker centers have a pivotal role in responding to workers rights issues (e.g., New Bedford factory closing) and have a clearer understanding of what is happening in immigrant communities. They understand the experience of immigrant workers, often better than professionals from outside communities, and can build trust more easily.

- He highlighted that there have been increased complains from Latino and indigenous workers in Chinese food restaurants who are being exploited and wherein the conditions may rise to the level of labor trafficking. Often, the workers are living in the restaurants, pay a high finder's fee, and may be subject to various forms of coercion.
- He also highlighted the work of Attorney Lydia Edwards at the Brazilian Immigrant Center, who founded the Domestic Worker Law and Policy Clinic. In the clinic, Attorney Edwards represents domestic workers in employment matters and is trying to organize domestic workers in Massachusetts.
- Tom emphasized the success of programs that were founded by immigrant workers, such as the Vita Verde Cooperative, a Brazilian cleaning cooperative in the Allston/Brighton area. He identified this as a model for organizing and empowering workers.

Presentation Regarding Trafficking of Men and Boys

Steven Procopio has twenty-eight years experience in non-profit and academic settings as a psychotherapist, administrator, developer, consultant and educator. He has worked as a consultant with partner agencies, including the Gay Lesbian and Straight Supporters (GLASS) Community Center and My Life My Choice. He has conducted extensive research regarding sex trafficking of men and boys in the Greater Boston area. He also teaches at the Boston University School of Social Work.

- His research focuses on marginalized youth, homeless youth, and children of color, who are involved in the sex trade. He is currently working on a project in collaboration with GLASS and My Life My Choice to provide male peer mentors to commercially sexually exploited boys.
- At GLASS, Steven interviewed children who often do not identify as being gay. Largely, the men and boys are homeless and in shelter or living communally with prostituted men. He described a “caste system” wherein there are primarily two groups of prostituted boys. There are boys who work as escorts in Boston hotels and may be “on call” for five to ten adults. In contrast, there are children who live on the street and often a picked up for “out calls” (e.g., Yankee stadium in New York). Steven also mentioned that there are online hookup sites that generally operate with some “right of refusal” and “cancellation” policies.
- In general, the identity of the “Johns” involved in buying male sex is a thirty-five year old white married man with children (e.g., politicians, clergy, police, bank employees, and members of the high finance world).
- We did not have sufficient time for Steven to entertain questions, so he agreed to come to the next Subcommittee meeting to continue his presentation.

Preparation for Presentation to the Task Force:

- We are expected to present our findings at the next Task Force meeting in approximately twenty minutes. This is a good opportunity to educate the Task Force about victim services while making more concrete recommendations. Hope to cover the different populations and needs of survivors.
- Joe McKown stressed the need, from a funder's perspective, for victim service providers to get out in the community and talk more effectively about the work they are doing in order to raise money for the cause.
- Audrey, Julie and Cherie will present at the Task Force meeting and will stay late to coordinate on messaging and the PowerPoint.

Upon proper motion made and seconded, the Co-Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:08.

List of Documents and Exhibits Used by Subcommittee

Meeting Notice/ Agenda

Needs Assessments for Victim Services Subcommittee Members

Draft PowerPoint Presentation for the Task Force

Next meeting: July 9th at 10 AM at FJC